

# ***FY07 – COBRA - Leaving State Employment?***

Have you ever wondered how you can continue your insurance coverage once you separate from State employment? The following details the COBRA process, listing the responsibilities of your department, you, the Department of Personnel and Administration, and the insurance carriers. Understanding the COBRA process and what you and others need to do should help you avoid a lapse in coverage should you elect to continue elect COBRA continuation coverage for medical, dental and / or your FSA.

## **Your Department's Responsibilities**

- Once a qualifying event occurs, (retirement, termination, divorce, death or loss of student status) your department's human resource office mails a COBRA packet within 14 days of the qualifying event. A COBRA packet includes:
  - Election notice
  - Rates
  - Enrollment form
  - Return envelope.
- Packet can be requested from your HR office in advance (no more than 30 days), but understand that it must be mailed to you.

## **Employee's / COBRA Enrollee's Responsibilities**

- Your COBRA election form must be received by the Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) **no later than 60 days following the later of:**
  - Qualifying event date
  - Date you receive the notice informing you of your right to continue coverage
  - Date your coverage as an active employee ends.
- Mail completed election form to:  
Department of Personnel and Administration  
Division of Human Resources  
Attn: COBRA Administrator  
1313 Sherman Street, First Floor  
Denver, Colorado 80203
- Your first premium payment must be made directly to carrier(s) **within 45 days of electing coverage** (the date election form was mailed).
- You will be billed directly by the carrier(s). For coverage to continue, you must make your payments directly to the carrier(s) **by the first of each month.**
- To cancel COBRA continuation coverage, you must provide a written request directly to the carrier(s).

## **DPA's Responsibilities**

- Process COBRA election form
- Provide carrier(s) with copy of election form
- Mail confirmation to employee

## **Carriers Responsibilities**

- Process participant's COBRA election.

- Mail statements / bills and issue new insurance cards (if applicable). In most cases the first statement / bill will be for **two** months of premiums.
- Resolve any billing and claim issues.

### **Timing**

- Your COBRA coverage will go into effect once your first premium is paid. **DO NOT** send premiums with your COBRA enrollment form. Coverage will then be retroactive to your initial COBRA eligibility date, provided your enrollment form was timely.
- Coverage for active employees continues through the end of the month in which the qualifying event occurs. The COBRA eligibility period begins on the first of the month following the end of active employee coverage. For example, if you terminate employment May 15, your active employee coverage ends on May 31. Your COBRA eligibility period starts June 1.
- Please note that the COBRA enrollment process can take up to three weeks to complete. During that time, your coverage is suspended pending receipt of your first premium; furthermore, you are financially responsible for any medical or dental services you receive. Once your COBRA continuation coverage is effective, you need to contact the carrier regarding the reimbursement process.

### **COBRA Open Enrollment**

- COBRA members have an Open Enrollment period just as active employees do. This is an opportunity for all participants to make changes to their coverage. Employees or dependents experiencing a COBRA qualifying event near or during COBRA Open Enrollment may need to make **two decisions** at this time:
  - 1) Initial election of COBRA continuation coverage for the remainder of the **current plan year**;
  - 2) Any new choices the participant may wish to make to their COBRA continuation coverage for the **upcoming new plan year**. These new choices would be accomplished through the COBRA Open Enrollment process.

This is only a description of the process and responsibilities. For more information on COBRA please visit [www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/benefits](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/benefits). You may also contact the State's COBRA Administrator, Jamie L. Thornton, at 303-866-2254 / 1-800-719-3434 or at [jamie.thornton@state.co.us](mailto:jamie.thornton@state.co.us).